

iF YOU PULL NORTH

A Documentary about Rafi Mokady

a Commander who was Left Behind Wounded

Directed by Orna Mokady Shavitt & Yael Shavitt



Log Line (.)

Rafi Mokady's dedication goes above and beyond during the 1967 Israeli-Syrian battle on the Golan Heights. When the battle is over, and Rafi is left wounded in the field, he is confident help is on the way.

Technical Info (.)

67 minutes, Colour, Native 16:9, Stereo

Production Format: MiniDV

Screening Format: Analog Betacam, Digital Betacam, mp4, MOV, DCP

Hebrew dialogue, Hebrew and English subtitles

Contact (.)

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Short Synopsis (.)

100 words

During the 1967 Israeli-Syrian battle on the Golan Heights, Major Rafi Mokady's dedication goes above and beyond in his continuous efforts to lead the Israeli troops in the planned direction and to prevent the casualties they will suffer later on. When the battle is over, and Rafi is left wounded in the field, he is confident help is on the way.

Based on the directors' profound research, which revealed formerly undisclosed pieces of information, the unfathomable story of Rafi Mokady – family man, promising scientist and devoted commander – is told for the first time. A story that wasn't meant to be revealed.

Long Synopsis (.)

225 words

Rafi Mokady, born in 1929, is a Doctor of soil and water sciences, the father of three and Commander of a Brigade's Reconnaissance Company in the Israel Defense Forces reserves. On June 9, 1967 (the Six Day War), Major Rafi Mokady heads a Reconnaissance Team whose role is to lead the Brigade in the breakthrough battle of the Golan Heights. The battle is fraught with complications and disorder that time and again thwart Rafi's efforts to direct the Brigade troops. But Rafi doesn't give up – he will do everything he can to restore the course of the battle and prevent the casualties the Brigade will suffer later on. At the height of these efforts, while fighting as a Battalion Commander – Rafi is wounded.

When the battle is over, and Rafi is left wounded in the field, he is confident help is on the way.

The historical story depicted in iF YOU PULL NORTH is based on the directors' profound research, through which formerly undisclosed pieces of information have been discovered. The film follows the events of the long days during which Rafi is alone in the field, while gradually laying out the course of the battle that led up to those days, along with flashbacks from 38 years of life. Thus, the unfathomable story of Rafi Mokady unfolds. A story that wasn't meant to be revealed.

Directors' Statement (.)

May 2006. I'm driving home after a research interview with David Karmeli, one of the first research interviews for the film. When I reach the main highway, I realize I'm not focused on driving and look for a place to stop, to calm down, to take in what he told me. I look at the photos he gave me and return to the last days of 5th grade. I recall the tension at home on the 15th, 16th and 17th of June, 1967; the relatives gathering at our house and whispering among themselves; the sense of uncertainty that takes over after we find out that my father, Major Rafi Mokady, commander of the 8th Brigade's Reconnaissance Company – is missing. He "disappeared" during the breakthrough battle of the Golan Heights and no one knows where he is. We are anxious, and in the background the country celebrates the glorious victory of the Six Day War.

I look at the photos David Karmeli, a colleague of my father's, gave me – photos he took when he found my father, and grasp the full extent of what he told me during our meeting: If the Brigade had hurried up, my father could have been saved.

Over the next few minutes I compose myself and resume driving. I realize the film I am making about my father is taking a different direction than the one I had planned.

At that time, my daughter, Yael, offers me her help in making the film, until she begins her academic studies. Together we continue the research and discover a story that is different than the one that's commonly known, a story that wasn't meant to be revealed. We are shocked at the contrast we find between Rafi's total dedication in battle and the Brigade's poor attempts on his behalf, in the following days. Gradually the film which was meant to recount Rafi's life, changes, and the story of the end of his life – the battle in which he was wounded and the subsequent days when he was missing – becomes the focus of the film.

Out of a sense of loyalty to Rafi, Yael decides to postpone her personal plans and devote herself completely to making the film. This film will be the first documentation of what really happened there.

One of the main challenges we deal with is determining our approach towards characters whose conduct in the story is unflattering, to say the least. We go through a process fraught with profound ethical dilemmas that require tough decisions, particularly concerning people who are no longer alive. Ultimately, our goal is to bring Rafi's true story to light, without hurting other people or their families. It will be a film told in understatement, directed at an active audience.

The film begins at the point in time when Rafi is wounded, and from there the plot splits into two parallel timelines. One – up until the moment he is wounded, and the other – from that moment on. Thus, the dissonance between the two is emphasized: in one, Rafi

does everything he can to lead the troops safely through the battle and in the other, not the least is done to save him.

In order for the audience to sense the uncertainty and the mystery that enveloped Rafi's "disappearance", we seek to have it undergo a similar emotional process. The viewer is not exposed to the full picture at the beginning of the film, but is provided various hints that throughout the film take on meaning, until the full story is formed.

Brief glimpses into Rafi's life up until the battle, shed light on the main plot and reinforce his image as a patriot, an intellectual and a documentarian by nature.

As we strive to convey Rafi's unique story, not the well-known triumphant war story, we decide to avoid using familiar archive material.

We hope the film will have the power to do well deserved historic justice and assimilate Rafi's true story in public awareness. We believe it is not only a story of brotherhood of soldiers counteracted by abandonment of a wounded soldier in the battlefield, but rather a universal story about the fundamental loyalty between friends, which undergoes the ultimate test.

Yael Shavitt
Orna Mokady Shavitt
September 2010

Rafi Mokady, 1929-1967 (.)

Rafi was born in Paris in 1929, when his parents, Vered and Moshe Mokady, lived there. A short time after his birth his parents separated and Rafi and his mother returned to Israel. Vered raised Rafi on her own – not a simple task in those days. Her efforts had a lasting effect on Rafi and shaped him into a devoted and loyal man. He promised himself that the family he would raise would be a family in the full sense of the word.

He married Shoshana Weinstein after they graduated from university and in the following years they had 3 children: Orna, Ofer and Dan.



His path as a scientist in the field of soil and water was characterized by original thinking, precision and uncompromising integrity. With infinite vigour he improved and enhanced Israel's soil research by implementing new approaches and tools. His enthusiasm resulted in a following of both students and scientists.

Rafi was also active in military reserve service out of a sense of dedication to his country and responsibility for the men of the Brigade with whom he served. Over the years he attained the position of Commander of the Brigade's Reconnaissance Company.

The responsibility, dedication and integrity that characterized Rafi were manifested in full force on June 9, 1967, in the breakthrough battle of the Golan Heights – the battle in which he was wounded.

Rafi's Military Track

Rafi grew up in Tel Aviv in the atmosphere that characterized the area before the establishment of the State of Israel. In his teens he was very active in the Gadna (paramilitary corps) as an instructor. Rafi enlisted in 1947, just a few months before the



IDF (Israel Defense Forces) was founded. During his military service he carried on as an instructor. At that time many new courses were formed in the IDF and Rafi was chosen time and again, either as a trainee or an instructor, to be in the first of several of these courses, which shaped the ethical approach of the IDF in its early days.

In 1950 Rafi completed his regular army service and for the next 17 years he devoted much of his time and skills to reserve duty as an officer in the 8th Brigade. In the early years he held various commanding positions in the Brigade's Infantry Battalion, and in 1960 he was appointed Commander of the Brigade's 87th Reconnaissance Company. In his years as Reconnaissance Company Commander, he reached the rank of Major.



June 1967, the Six Day War. The Brigade in which Rafi serves is charged with the breakthrough battle of the Golan Heights. The battle plan is to flank an area covered with scores of Syrian military posts – the area of “Kala”. Rafi assembles a Reconnaissance Team whose role is to lead the Brigade, and takes upon himself to head the Team. The battle is fraught with complications and

disorder. The speeding tanks of the Brigade drive past the Reconnaissance Team and continue in the wrong direction. Their erroneous route leads them to the dangerous area that must be avoided. Dedicated to his mission, Rafi does everything he can to restore the course of the battle and prevent the casualties the Brigade will suffer later on at Kala. When the Commander of the Tank Battalion is wounded, Rafi volunteers and is appointed Battalion Commander in his place, and at the Brigade Commander's order he continues his efforts to steer the tanks in the planned direction.

At the height of these efforts, while fighting as a Battalion Commander – Rafi is wounded.

Rafi's Academic Track

As a patriotic Israeli in the 50s, Rafi's decision to study agriculture was only natural. He studied at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Agriculture and specialized in soil and water sciences. He identified the matters important to the agriculture and to the soil and water economy in Israel, and chose them as topics for his research.



During his studies Rafi realized that the qualitative research approach, that was customary at the Faculty of Agriculture at the time, would limit the progress of soil research. He believed the future of research was in the quantitative-mathematical approach. He wanted to know what happens inside the soil system on a microscopic level, and aspired to get to the root of the problems and

formulate them mathematically. But the courses in the Faculty of Agriculture did not offer the required mathematical and physical subjects and later Rafi decided to study them on his own. As an instructor in the lab, he engrossed a group of students and together they studied physical chemistry of the soil.

In 1964, Rafi completed his post doctorate in the USA, returned to Israel, and became a senior lecturer at the Technion in Haifa. With his typical fervour, he initiated the establishment of an innovative unit for soil research that focused on subjects in physical chemistry of the soil, that had not been researched in the Technion before. He also developed a course in physical chemistry of the soil, the first of its kind in Israel.



The changes that Rafi led in the Faculty of Agriculture and at the Technion, assimilated the quantitative approach in the studies of soil in Israel, and formed the foundation for modern research of soil science in the country.

Credits & Bios (.)

Director, Producer; Research, Photography & Editing

Orna Mokady Shavitt is a PhD in Biochemistry from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, and author of the book *Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology* (Hebrew, 1994). Studied Digital Media at The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya. Pursued studies in Video Art at The School of Art of Beit Berl, followed by studies in Documentary Filmmaking at The International Film & Television Workshops, Rockport, Maine. Directed the short documentary *Blaikie Hines* (2005). *iF YOU PULL NORTH* is her first feature length film.



Director, Producer; Research, Photography & Editing

Yael Shavitt studied Theatre Arts at The Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts in Israel, and graduated with Merit. She is a self-taught filmmaker and *iF YOU PULL NORTH* is her first film. Yael has recently graduated from The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York.

Original Score

Hana Ajiashvili received her Masters in piano and composition (in Mamisashvili's class) from the Music Sergiashvili Academy in Georgia. She continued her composition studies with composer Tarnopolsky at Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. In 2001 she immigrated to Israel, and in 2004 won First Prize at the Israel Contemporary Players' Young Israeli Composers Competition. Hana completed her doctorate at Bar-Ilan University under the supervision of Lewensohn and Olivero. In 2008 she received the Prime Minister's Award for Composers.



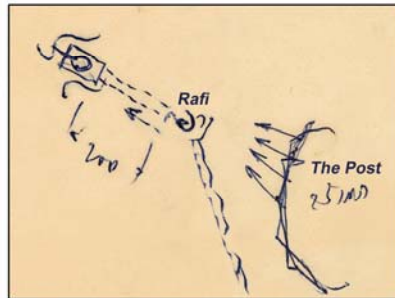
Production Stills (.)



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1. On the way to the Golan Heights on June 9, 1967 (courtesy of Kfar Szold archive)
2. A drawing of the events during which Rafi Mokady was wounded. By Rafi's uncle, E. Yalan
3. Rafi Mokady's journal in the field
4. Yael Shavitt in the process of paper editing
5. Yael Shavitt filming on the set
6. Orna Mokady Shavitt filming on the Golan Heights